

TOUGHENING STAND, MOSCOW CUTS BACK GAS FOR LITHUANIA

3 OF 4 PIPELINES CLOSED

But Kremlin Makes a Gesture
to Neighboring Republics,
Outlining New Status

By ESTHER B. FEIN

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MOSCOW, April 19 — The Kremlin sharply increased its economic sanctions against Lithuania today, slashing supplies of natural gas to the republic only hours after completely halting the flow of crude oil there.

While using pressure as a tactic to force the defiant republic into rescinding its strongest independence legislation, President Mikhail S. Gorbachev tried to persuade Latvia and Estonia, Lithuania's Baltic neighbors, to remain within the Soviet Union by describing a plan for a changed confederation of the 15 Soviet republics.

Acting on its threat to halt crucial supplies to Lithuania, Moscow shut off three of the four natural gas pipelines serving the republic this morning, officials of the Lithuanian Parliament said. This cut by more than 80 percent the republic's daily supply of natural gas, which is used for home heating and cooking and to generate electricity at a Lithuanian power plant.

One Pipeline Left

A fourth pipeline was continuing to carry 3.5 million cubic meters of gas a day to the republic, which normally consumes 18 million a day.

All deliveries of crude oil, which is used to provide heat and power for factories and in gasoline and other petroleum products, were cut off Wednesday night. Lithuanian officials estimated that the republic's reserves would last about four months if strict measures were adopted to economize.

Lithuanian officials said tonight that they had ordered the cutoff of all energy supplies to Soviet military facilities in the republic and had warned factories run by Moscow that they had no guarantee of future energy deliveries. Immediate rationing of gasoline for private cars was also ordered, with a limit of 30 liters per month.

Talk of Further Retaliation

A spokesman for the Soviet Foreign Ministry, Vadim Perfil'yev, said today at a news conference in Moscow that further economic measures against the republic could not be ruled out.

Lithuania is almost entirely dependent on the Soviet Union for its fuel. A spokesman for the republic's government appealed to Lithuanians today to use fuel sparingly.

"Where we can give up the use of gas, petrol, any heating or lighting, let us do this," the spokesman, Ceslovas Jursenas, said in a broadcast on Lithuanian radio. "And then we will be able to survive longer, and maybe we will

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not be intimidated by these sanctions."

In informing Lithuania in a telegram that its natural gas supply had been severely reduced, Soviet officials said the new supply level would "guarantee a normal supply of gas for residents and communal domestic use in Lithuania," Lithuanian officials reported.

Mr. Gorbachev and Prime Minister Nikolai I. Ryzhkov issued an ultimatum last Friday, saying that supplies of important materials to Lithuania would be cut off within 48 hours if the republic's Parliament failed to roll back some of the toughest legislation it has passed since it declared independence on March 11.

The ultimatum specifically called for the repeal of legislative decisions to issue citizen identity cards, to boycott the Soviet military's spring call-up and to lay claim to property in Lithuania that Moscow says is owned by the Soviet Government and the Soviet Communist Party.

Moscow Assails 'Illegal Acts'

An official statement issued tonight by the Soviet press agency Tass said that "instructions" were given "to cut oil supplies and also to scale down gas supplies to the republic" because "the Lithuanian leadership has taken no measures to rescind its illegal acts."

In a telegram to Mr. Gorbachev on Monday night, the Lithuanian Prime Minister, Kazimiera Prunskiene, offered to compromise on the issues raised by the Soviet President. But she refused to revoke the measures wholesale, and her position was echoed by the Lithuanian Parliament in its own reply on Wednesday to Mr. Gorbachev's demands.

The official statement carried tonight by Tass said that Mrs. Prunskiene's telegram "gave no constructive answer to any proposals" made by Mr. Gorbachev and Mr. Ryzhkov. This prompted the Kremlin to move forward and put its threatened embargo into force, Tass said.

Seeking to prevent Estonia and Lat-

via from following Lithuania to independence, Mr. Gorbachev met today with leaders of the two republics. Representatives from Estonia and Latvia said Mr. Gorbachev proposed a new confederation of the 15 Soviet republics, an idea he has been floating for some time.

Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia were independent countries between the two world wars. They were forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940 as a result of secret protocols between Stalin and Hitler dividing Eastern Europe into spheres of influence.

The Estonian Parliament has declared Soviet rule over its territory to be illegal and has begun what it describes as a transition toward re-establishing its independence. The Latvian

all its military bases from our territory. But he said he hopes that we choose to stay, and that if we do, we could get some kind of special status within the Soviet Union. But he did not specify what that means."

In his meeting with the Estonians, including President Arnold Ruutel, Prime Minister Edgar Savisaar and Endel Lippmaa, a minister without portfolio, Mr. Gorbachev demanded that the Estonian Parliament revoke the declaration of a gradual transition to independence that it approved on March 30, Mr. Lippmaa said.

"As for us, his proposal about a renewed confederation is simply not acceptable to us," Mr. Lippmaa said. "We want back the independence that the Soviet Union took from us 50 years ago and nothing less."

He said the Estonian delegation nonetheless had agreed to put Mr. Gorbachev's proposal before its Parliament on Monday.

Soviet Rules on Secession

Mr. Gorbachev has said that any Soviet republic is free to secede from the Soviet Union provided that it follows the procedures recently established by the Soviet Parliament, including the holding of a public referendum, negotiations with Moscow over a five-year period and the approval of the Soviet congress.

The three Baltic republics have maintained that since they were illegally forced into the Soviet Union, they should be allowed to use any method they choose in leaving.

On Wednesday, Lithuania's leaders offered to stop passing new legislation until May 1 if the Kremlin agreed to preliminary talks on independence.

Bronius Vainora, the director of Lithuania's only oil refinery, at Mazeikiai, said by telephone today that half of the refinery had been shut down and that layoffs among the plant's 3,500 workers had begun.

The Mazeikiai refinery processed 13 million tons of oil last year, of which about 7 million tons were used by Lithuania. Its chief engineer, Albertas Gimbutas, said in a telephone interview today that all the output from the refinery would remain in the republic during the crisis.

Most of the homes in the republic of 3.6 million people are heated by natural gas. Lithuania produces some energy at a small hydroelectric power station in Kaunas, an electrical station in Elektrenai and a nuclear power station at Ignalina, although the nuclear plant has been closed for repairs.

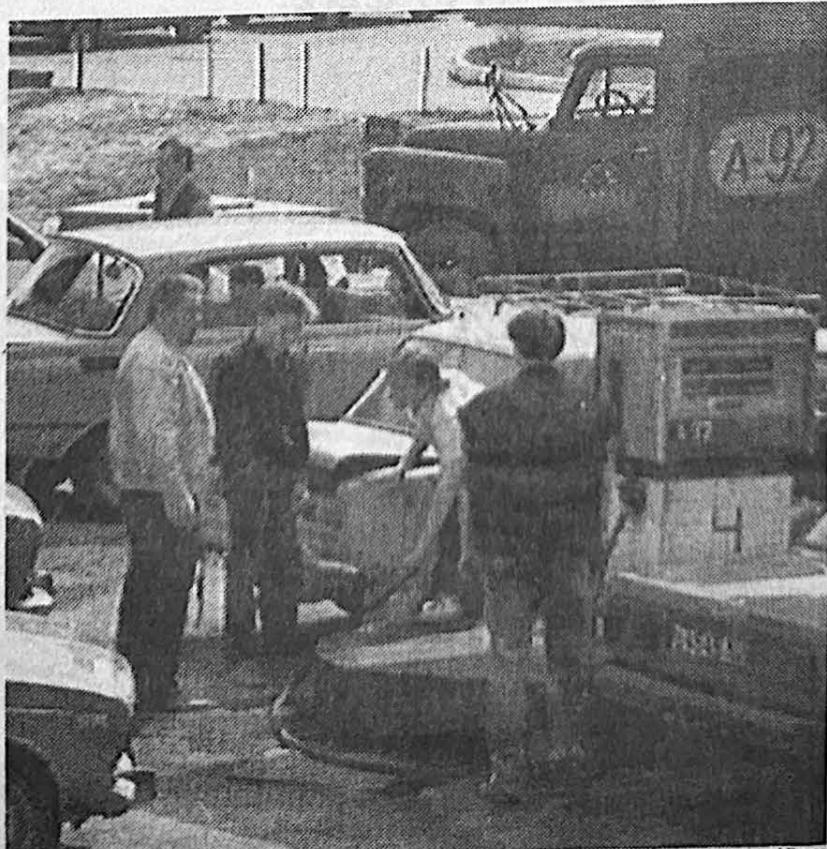
Norway Urges End to Embargo

OSLO, April 19 (AP) — Norway said today that Lithuania was free to buy Norwegian oil, but urged Moscow to lift an energy embargo against the Baltic republic before outside supplies are needed.

A Lithuanian delegation led by Prime Minister Kazimiera Prunskiene sought support from Norwegian leaders here, but Foreign Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik said there were no immediate contracts or offers of Government aid.

"Norway has not used, and will not use, oil as a foreign policy tool," Mr. Bondevik said, adding that it was up to the oil companies to decide whether to sell to Lithuania.

The state oil company, Statoil, has said it was willing to sell oil to Lithuania at market prices for hard currency, but Lithuania has little hard currency. A second potential supplier is Norsk Hydro, which is 51 percent state-owned.



Associated Press

Lithuanians getting rations of gasoline in Vilnius yesterday.